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**DRAFT FOR REVIEW CONTACT:**

**February 1, 2020**

**[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] Joins Help Minnesota Smile Coalition Advocates for Reinstatement of Dental Benefits**

*A coalition of concerned dental stakeholders is working to restore basic oral health benefits to help improve oral health among adults with low incomes*.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN – [INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION] has joined the Help Minnesota Smile Coalition, which is advocating for a full restoration of essential adult dental benefits that were cut by the Minnesota legislature in 2009.

Our [INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION] believes that [insert reason for joining]

Oral health plays a crucial role in our overall health. When left untreated, dental diseases negatively impact overall health and well-being. Bacteria from the mouth can cause infection in other parts of the body, especially when the immune system has been compromised by disease or medical treatments. Good oral health not only helps prevent bad breath, tooth decay and gum disease, it also can help decrease the impact of other diseases on overall health. An unhealthy mouth may increase the risk of serious and costly health problems including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and even preterm labor.

Aside from improving the overall dental health of Minnesotans, reinstating dental benefits would also ensure a more efficient use of health care dollars. For example, a 2014 report from Minnesota’s Department of Human Services showed Minnesota spent nearly $50 million per year on oral health visits in ERs across the state. Instead of distributing antibiotics for infections and providing temporary relief for health issues, the Help Minnesota Smile coalition is advocating for these dollars to instead be spent on preventative care.

By restoring full adult dental coverage, Minnesota will once again support the health and wellness of those who are most at risk. These efforts will have a positive impact on the oral health of low income adults, adults with disabilities, and older adults. To learn more about the Help Minnesota Smile coalition, visit helpmnsmile.org.